(v) Government has recently launched Technology Mission for Cotton. One of the important ingredients of the Mission is to improve cotton processing facilities by upgrading/modernising the exsisting ginning and pressing factories.

WTO Obligations on Textile Industry

2904. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to State :

(a)what are the impacts of WTO obligations on textile industry ;

(b)the measures taken to assist the textile industry in this regard; and

(c) the marketing facilities provided to them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHADRAN): (a) and (b) The obligation on the part of all members of WTO, including India, is progressive reduction of import tariffs to agreed levels and phase out of quantitative restraints. Thereafter, international trade in textiles and clothing would be conducted on a completely non-discriminatory basis, as the case in respect of other goods. In order to assist the textile industry to successftilly face competition of the quota-free regime. Government has been taking measures from time to time. Some of the initiatives taken in this regard are :—

(i) The Tehnology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUF) has been made operational from 1-4-1999 to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of this sector so that it can become more competitive in international trade.

(ii) The facility to import capital goods under Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme at 5% concessional rate of duty.

(iii) Liberalisation of exports of cotton yarn by Export Oriented Unit (EOU)/Export Promotion Zone (EPZ)/EPCG units.

(iv) Zero Duty import of certain categories of trimmings & embellishments.

(v) Government has recently launched Technology Mission for Cotton. One of the important ingredients of the Mission is to improve cotton processihg facilities by upgrading/modernising the existing ginning and pressing factories.

(vi) Allowing foreign equity participation upto 100%, through automatic route, in the textile sector with certain exceptions.

(vii) To prepare and sensitise our textile and garment industry to conform to the ecological requirement of importing countries by providing facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories.

(viii) National Institute for Fashion Technology (NIFT), and its six branches and Apparel Training & Design Centres (ATDCs) are running various courses/programmes to meet skilled manpower requirements of textile industry in the field of design, merchandising and marketing.

(ix) The New Exporters' Entitlement (Quota) Policy announced for the period 2000-2004 announced recently to provide stability and continuity and encourage competitiveness in textile exports.

(c) The Textile Export Promotion Councils are regularly undertaking various programmes to promote exports of textiles, which include participation in trade fairs/exhibitions, conducting buyer-seller meets, market studies and sending high level trade delegations.

Modernisation of NTC Mills

2905. SHRI KARNENDUBHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a)whether it is a fact that Government have prepared any plan for modernisation of NTC mills all over India;

(b)if so, the region-wise details of such mills;

(c) the number of such mills located in Eastern India;

(d) the reasons for not taking up modernisation plans in respect of remaining mills;

(e) the steps proposed to be taken for revival of NTC mills specially in Eastern India; and

(f) what steps have been taken/proposed to be taken to ensure that workforce employed in these mills are not rendered jobless?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAIVIACHANDRAN): (a) to (fj The NTC Mills in Eastern India are managed by NTC (WBAB & O) Ltd., Calcutta, a subsidiary of NTC Ltd.